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## New Kennecott plant good for all

Turning mounds of dirt into 3-foot squares of pure copper without making a mess isn't cheap.

But, as with most things in life, you get what you pay for. Kennecott's \$880 million modernization project, unveiled to reporters last week, promises big dividends not only for the company but for all residents of the Salt Lake Valley.

Of the sulfur generated in the smelting process, 99.9 percent will be recaptured in the new plant, rather than spewing into the atmosphere. A new technology known as "flash smelting" will keep workers from having to transfer molten metal, a practice that generated large quantities of emissions in the old smelter -- emissions that at times made breathing less than enjoyable.

The new facility also will use excess

heat to generate about 85 percent of its electrical needs, and eventually it will be able to process all of the copper concentrate it generates. Previously, 40 percent of the concentrate was shipped to other refineries.

The upgrade is particularly impressive considering it was initiated by Kennecott's parent company, RTZ Corp., not by any government or court mandate.

Company officials expect the new plant to be one of the lowest costing copper producers in the world. If that's true, it will mean a healthy copper industry in Utah for years to come. More importantly, it will mean that smelting and refining no longer have to come at the expense of clean air along the Wasatch Front.